AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims found below.

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended) A charge metering method for data transmission in a telephone network ~~employing a circuit-switched transmission network including exchanges which control and allocate network resources~~ comprising a centralized network and decentralized network resources, comprising:

storing ~~at least one~~an electronic credit which includes a statement on the amount of use of transmission units of the telephone network on two terminals operated on the data transmission network;

controlling use of data transmission units of the telephone network by two control units based at a terminating end of the respective terminals and decentralized from the centralized network;

transmitting ~~a~~the electronic credit for use of a data transmission path to one of the~~an assigned~~ control unit~~s~~; ~~and~~

determining at the respective terminating end whether the credit transmitted is valid; and

reserving by ~~clearing~~ the data transmission units of the telephone network to use the data transmission path for communicating voice data between the two terminals ~~based on~~ in response to determining that the electronic credit received is valid.

2.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein one of the terminals sends the other terminal the ~~at least one~~ electronic credit, and the electronic credit coming from the one terminal is sent by the other terminal to the assigned control unit.

3.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the terminal sending the <u>electronic</u> credit is the terminal beginning the data transmission or the terminal responding to a network-side request for data transmission.

4.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ electronic credit is issued in conjunction with the data transmission path which is to be set up or has been set up.

5.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ electronic credit includes at least a statement of the data transmission path including at least one of an identification of the terminal beginning the data transmission, an identification of the other terminal, an identification for the interface used in the data transmission of the terminal beginning the data transmission, an identification for the interface used in the data transmission of the other terminal and an identification for a transmission protocol used in the data transmission, wherein the statement is checked by the control units.

6.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a period of validity or a date of validity is electronically fixed for the at least one electronic credit, and the period of validity is at least one of less than approximately five minutes, less than approximately one minute or less than approximately 30 seconds from the issue of the electronic credit, and the period of validity and/or the date of validity are checked by the control units.

7.   (currently amended) The method as claimed in claim 5, wherein the statement included in the ~~at least one~~ electronic credit is protected with the aid of a cryptographic method, and the control units check the genuineness of the ~~at least one~~ electronic credit.

8.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the statement included in the credits is protected with the aid of a cryptographic method, and the control units check the genuineness of the electronic credits.

9.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the telephone

network is a data transmission network operating in accordance with Internet Protocol, and/or for

setting up the data transmission path the protocol SIP is used, and/or for allocating the network

resources of the data transmission network the protocol RSVP or a protocol for the method DiffServ

is used.

10.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the method is used

for the transmission of voice data as part of a telephone service.

11.   (currently amended) A telephone network ~~employing a circuit-switched transmission~~

~~network including exchanges which control and allocate network resources~~, comprising:

two terminals operated on a data transmission network storing ~~at least one~~an electronic

credit which includes a statement on an amount of use of transmission units of the network; and

two control units based at a terminating end of the respective terminals and decentralized

from the centralized network ~~in~~by which use of data transmission units of the telephone network is

controlled, wherein

the terminals transmit ~~a~~the electronic credit for use of a data transmission path to ~~an assigned~~

a respective one of the control unit~~s~~, and based on the electronic credit received, the control units

~~clear~~reserve the transmission units of the telephone network ~~to use~~for communication voice data

between the two terminals using the data transmission path.

12.   (currently amended) A computer readable medium having a program with a series of

commands, a processor of a telephone network ~~employing a circuit-switched transmission network~~

~~including exchanges which control and allocate network resources~~, executing the program to

perform:

storing ~~at least one~~an electronic credit which includes a statement on an amount of use of

transmission units of a data transmission network on two terminals operated on the telephone

network;

controlling the use of data transmission units of the telephone network by two control units that are based at a terminating end of the respective terminals and decentralized from the centralized network;

transmitting ~~a~~the credit for use of a data transmission path to ~~an assigned~~a respective one of the control unit~~s~~; ~~and~~

~~clearing~~reserving the data transmission units of the telephone network for communicating voice data between the two terminals using ~~to use~~ the data transmission path ~~based on~~in response to the electronic credit received.

13.   (currently amended) A control unit in which data transmission units of a telephone network including a centralized network and decentralized network resources ~~employing a circuit switched transmission network including exchanges which control and allocate network resources~~, is controlled, wherein a terminal transmits a~~n~~ electronic credit for use of a data transmission path to an assigned control unit based at a terminating end of another terminal, and based on the electronic credit received, the assigned control unit ~~clears~~reserves the transmission units of the telephone network ~~to~~ for communicating voice data between the terminal and the another terminal~~use the data transmission path~~.

14.   (currently amended) A terminal operated on a telephone network ~~employing a circuit switched transmission network including exchanges which control and allocate network resources~~, storing ~~at least one~~an electronic credit which includes a statement on an amount of use of transmission units of the telephone network, wherein

the terminal transmits ~~a~~the electronic credit for use of a data transmission path to an assigned control unit, and based on credit received, the control unit ~~clears~~reserves the transmission units of the telephone network to use the data transmission path for communicating voice data between the terminal and another terminal.